

What is claimed is:

1. A call management system for interconnecting a customer who is using a  
5 communication device, with one of a plurality of customer agents; said interconnection  
thereby establishing a service call, said call management system comprising:  
    means for segmenting said call into a plurality of phases;  
    means for predicting a current phase of said call from said plurality of phases;  
and,  
10      means for estimating time remaining on said call.
2. The call management system of claim 1 wherein said means for estimating  
comprises a means for classifying said call into one of a plurality of call classes.
- 15 3. The call management system of claim 2 wherein said means for estimating further  
comprises means for performing methods of automatic speech analysis upon the service  
call.
4. The call management system of claim 3 wherein said methods of automatic  
20 speech analysis are selected from the group consisting of Automatic Speech Recognition,  
accent recognition, disfluency recognition, speaking rate categorization, and verbosity  
categorization.
5. The call management system of claim 4 further comprising:  
25      means for queuing additional calls awaiting an available agent from said plurality  
of customer agents;  
    means for predicting the availability of an agent currently engaged in a service  
call based on said estimated time remaining on said call and,  
    means for assigning one of said queued additional calls to said currently engaged  
30 agent.

6. The call management system of claim 5, wherein the call management system is an outbound contact center and wherein the system further comprises:

means for originating an outbound call to a customer prior to the currently engaged agent completing the service call.

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7. The call management system of claim 3 wherein said means for estimating further comprises evaluating the proportion of time the customer speaks relative to time the agent speaks.

10 8. The call management system of claim 3 wherein said means for estimating further comprises evaluating status of a computer screen displayed to the agent.

9. The call management system of claim 3 wherein said means for estimating further comprises means for modeling the flow from one phase of said plurality of phases of the  
15 call to another phase of said plurality of phases of the call.

10. The call management system of claim 9, further comprising a feedback means for improving accuracy of said modeling means by utilizing feedback of when the call actually ended.

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11. A method estimating the time remaining on a service call, for use in a call management system which interconnects a customer who is using a communication device, with one of a plurality of customer agents; said interconnection thereby establishing said service call; said method comprising the steps of:

25 segmenting said call into a plurality of phases;  
predicting a current phase of the call from said plurality of phases; and,  
estimating time remaining on said call using said predicted current phase.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said estimating step comprises a step of  
30 classifying said call into one of a plurality of call classes.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said estimating step further comprises a step of performing methods of automatic speech analysis upon the service call.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said methods of automatic speech analysis are selected from the group consisting of Automatic Speech Recognition, accent recognition, disfluency recognition, speaking rate categorization, and verbosity categorization.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said estimating step further comprises a step of evaluating the proportion of time the customer speaks relative to time the agent speaks.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said estimating step further comprises a step of evaluating status of a computer screen displayed to the agent.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein said estimating step further comprises a step of modeling the flow from one phase of said plurality of phases of the call to another phase of said plurality of phases of the call.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of improving accuracy of said modeling step by providing feedback of when the call actually ended.